DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 262 831 JC 850 510

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TITLE Professionalism and Community College Faculty.
PUB DATE [85]
NOTE 22p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Community Colleges; *Group Status; Literature Reviews; Prestige; *Professional Development; *Professional Recognition; Role Conflict; Self Concept; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Professionalism

ABSTRACT

Although community college faculty can be identified as a distinct group, it is difficult to completely separate them from their counterparts in the secondary schools and universities. Though time has weakened the links that community colleges once had with secondary schools, there are still many vestiges of those historical ties. However, studies have indicated that the community college faculty tends to identify more closely with university professors. Like secondary school teachers, community college faculty focus on instruction of students; like university faculty, they express the desire to engage in research and scholarly writing, although they seldom do so. The issue of the professional status of community college faculty centers on this duality. Criteria defining professionalism have been long identified, validated, and accepted. It is consistently indicated in the literature that "teachers" have not yet evolved into professionals, although "university professors" have. Community college faculty have made progress toward satisfying the criteria of professionalism, but are often cited as being deficient in the areas of self-governance, the development of a body of knowledge, and the establishment of a communal identity. The major obstacle in the community college faculty's progress toward professional status is the tremendous amount of time that is spent in direct student contact. A second obstacle lies in the bureaucratic structures of the institution itself. Professional associations have also proven to be a barrier, rather than a support, to community college faculty's struggle for professional recognition. A final problem rests in the deficiencies and limitations of inservice faculty development programs. Overcoming these barriers and enhancing the professional process will require changes by the institutions, professional associations, and individual faculty members themselves. (EJV)

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PROFESSIONALISM AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY

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Professionalism and Community College Faculty

Abstract

Although community college faculty can be identified as a distinct group, it is difficult to completely separate them from their counterparts in the secondary schools and universities. While it is true that time has weakened the ties the community colleges had with the secondary schools, that historical influence is still somewhat felt. Conversely, studies have indicated that the role identity of community college faculty tends toward university professors. This dichotomy is extended when the functions of the community college instructor are explored. Like secondary school teachers, community college faculty focus on instruction of students; like university faculty, they express the desire to engage in research and scholarly writing, although they seldom do so.

The issue of professional status centers around this duality. Criteria defining professionalism have been long identified, validated and accepted. It is consistently indicated in the literature that "teachers" have not yet evolved into professionals; although "university professors" have. This paper explores the progress made by community college faculty in satisfying the criteria. The three areas most often cited as being deficient will be discussed in depth: self-governance, development of a body of knowledge, and establishment of a communal identity. Recommendations for activities to enhance work in these areas are included.

Professionalism and Community College Faculty

Introduction-

Community college faculty originally evolved from the secondary schools, and although this relationship has weakened with time, there are still many vestiges of those ties. Faculty in two-year institutions have also expressed the desire to be identified as college teachers along with their counterparts in the four-year sector. Classification systems illustrate a continuum of role identity of the community college faculty. For example, Cohen describes the discoverer, the synthesizer, the translater, the practitioner and the commuter. At one level, discoverers, synthesizers, and, to some, extent, translators conduct research, develop theories and disseminate the findings via publications; at the opposite end, practitioners and commuters use the tools of the discipline to impart knowledge to students, but contribute little to original inquiry(Cohen, Brawer, & Lombardi, 1971).

Although Cohen (1977) maintains that the secondary school has nearly disappeared as a reference point, it is still true that the focus of a community college instructor is teaching--to an extent more like the high school teacher than the university professor. It is also well documented that community college faculty desire to be identified with university professors (Cohen, Brawer, Frankle, Lombardi & Purdy, 1975; Palinchak, 1973). Cohen et al (1971) suggest that a merger of the teaching focus of the ideal high school teacher with the professional

orientation of the prototype university professor should take place to develop an "integrated" community college instructor. In 1969, Alan Stratton stated that the longing to be identified with universities may be as damaging to the community collegemovement as the desire to be identified with the high schools. "It is time that teachers...in two-year colleges begin to identify with themselves. We are engaged in a different effort in higher education than the others" (cited in Palinchak, 1973,p.212).

The issue of professionalization of community college faculty rests in this duality of role identity. Criteria describing professional status have long been identified, validated and accepted. The literature indicates that "teachers" have not yet completed this process, while "university professors" have (Goode, 1969; Ornstein, 1984; Wilensky, 1964). However, if community colleges are believed to be part of higher education, the standards relating to them cannot be isolated from the larger educational community.

Criteria for Professional Status -

What are the criteria that separates a profession from a craft, trade or occupation? Although there are some variations in the literature, a consistent list can be developed. William Goode (1969) categorizes all of the characteristics under two central qualities--a basic body of abstract knowledge and an ideal of service. Other generally accepted criteria include a lengthy period of specialized training, an element of autonomy and self-governance over entry and decisions about the workplace,

a communal sense of identity, a formal organization, and a code of ethics that clarifies ambiguity of services (Cohen & Brawer, 1977; Ornstein, 1984).

Self-governance. The criteria for self-governance implies peer judgement about entry, retention and dismissal within the group. It also indicates that the members of the profession are in control of the fundamental aspects of their work, and are accountable for the effect of that work. Peer judgement has not been entirely incorporated into the functions of community college faculty. The ultimate responsibility for hiring, retention and dismissal matters remains with the district officials or board members. Peer review is often part of the evaluation process, but it is usually meaningless, and merely advances the illusion of professionalism by appearing as though educators were policing their own ranks. Cohen and Brawer (1977) note that faculty themselves have been barriers to increasing accountability within the ranks. In the 1970's many states tried to mandate faculty accountability. Although much activity ensued in terms of evaluation guidelines, and even the abolition of tenure in favor of continuing contracts; faculty evaluation continued to have little impact. Judicial decisions of grievances of faculty found wanting were usually based on procedural rather than substantive factors.

In terms of control over the spheres of work, the matters most commonly under the jurisdiction of faculty are admissions, curricular structure and course content. However, as Zoglin points out, "The dream of collegiality and decision making by a

community of scholars is powerful and enduring" (Zoglin, 1976). She notes that many community colleges have some elements of dual authority structures such as academic senates, faculty organizations and committees in conjunction with collective bargaining agreements.

There is ongoing debate about the value of collective bargaining and its impact on the process of professionalism. Cohen (1973, 1977) is essentially negative about collective bargaining. He maintains that the tendancy to cause polarization of the power groups serves to reinforce inequality by making procedures more permanent and difficult to change. He regretsthat the onset of collective bargaining came along prior to the emergence of a professional consciousness; before teachers began to devlop their special skills that set them apart from those engaged in an occupation. Cohen maintains that unionization has created more rules relating to the workforce and therefore, has reduced the extent of collegiality and autonomy. Gleazer (1980) suggests that a casualty of collective bargaining may be the loss of faculty as a creative resource for the institution in terms of their contributions to defining and communicating institutional mission. Zoglin (1976) points out that the negotiating process drives faculty and administrators apart and stresses differences instead of common interests. Decisions are made on the basis of compromise rather than consensus. Smeltekopf (1983) maintains that, while organizations devoted to "bread and butter" issues are important and have their place, such groups do little for the professional status of

faculty.

On the other other hand, collective bargaining has given faculty more control over the workplace in terms of conditions such as class size, instructional material and curricular matters. In addition to equitable salaries, many contracts provide for faculty development opportunities. It is also true that collegiality and peer judgement cannot be stifled if it never existed, and collective bargaining may, in fact, be a beginning of the communal process. The co-existance of academic governing groups and bargaining groups discussed by Zoglin may be the ideal solution to this dilemma. This is viable however, only if areas of concern are clearly defined, and it is understood that both groups cannot be used for the same issus at the same time (Zoglin, 1976). Discussions about the value of collective bargaining for faculty, or about the place it has in any professional setting are moot, because clearly, it is here to stay. What is more important is the mutual understanding by faculty and administrators of the purposes of autonomy in respect to professional status. The aim of self-governance is to protect the user of the service from incompetent practice. Professionals maintain and control the standards of practice for themselves because they are best suited to do so. This has not yet been achieved by community college faculty with or without the influence of collective bargaining.

Body of Knowledge. Members of a profession have mastered a body of knowledge that establishes their expertise, and protects the public from amateurs and special interest groups.

Professions have a monopoly on this knowledge that separates them from the general public and allows for the exercise of control over the vocation. Whereas the behavioral sciences, physical sciences and health fields can be guided by rules of procedure and established methodologies, education lacks a well-defined body of knowledge that is applicable to the real world of teaching, or that has been validated and agreed upon by most authorities (Orstein, 1984).

To the extent that community college faculty adhere to their academic disciplines, a body of knowledge is displayed. However, this is not readily apparent in the discipline of instruction which lacks the infrastructure of research, advocacy and dissemination. Cohen and Brawer (1977) maintain that teaching is still a craft, that in the absence of organizing principles, each practitioner learns his own tricks and makes adjustments as needed. The art of teaching still lacks theoretical justification.

Cohen and Brawer (1977) also point out that instruction as a discipline of organized knowledge with its own theories, vocabulary, tested procedures and operating methodologies has not yet taken hold in the two-year colleges. Teaching there is often still conducted on the basis of "If you know it, you can teach it" (p.41). There is a distinction between instructional theory and its practice. Theory emphasizes the outcomes or intended results of teaching; practice focuses primarily on the media and methods of teaching. It is always difficult for faculties to agree on criteria and technical aspects of instructional

evaluations this may be compounded in the community college setting because, in some cases, institutional goals are not well defined (Cohen, 1969). This lack of mutual understanding is not conducive to the development of instructional outcomes.

Borg and Gall (1979) indicate that educational research has been slow in developing theoretical foundations upon which every science must be built. Educators have often adapted new and unproved ideas that later research proved valueless or even detrimental to the educational process. This reliance on personal experience has impaired the progress toward the professional development of a distinct body of knowledge. Research enables educators to make observable progress. The authors point out that a body of theory has begun to be developed to permit sound approaches to practical problems of education. Continued development through scientific investigation must continue at the community college level in order to describe precisely what is it that the faculty do that cannot effectively be done by anyone else.

Communal Identity. The professional element of communal identity is tied to the perceptions held by the members themselves. Community college faculty in general are not involved in the professional activities that generate collegial interaction. Studies indicate that they are less likely to be affiliated with an organization, and that they read fewer journals. Interactions with colleagues are more frequently based on questions of rights, welfare, and institutional concerns. The Center for the Study of Community Colleges surveyed faculty in 156 community colleges. When asked how many journals or

periodicals they subscribed to or read regularly or occasionally, 64% answered none. Fifty-five percent indicated that they had attended no regional or national meetings or conferences (Cohen & Brawer, 1977). Studies of part-time instructors, now more than 50% of community college faculty, reveal that part-timers are less involved with organizations, and spend less time reading professional journals than their full-time counterparts (Friedlander, 1980).

Barriers to Professional Status

The major obstacle in the community college faculty's progress toward professional status is the tremendous amount of time that is spent in direct student contact. Cohen et al (1975) noted that faculty in four-year public institutions were most concerned with research activities; in four-year private schools, the relationship with colleagues was the primary concern. However, in the two-year institutions, faculty in both sectors indicated that their priorities were with the quality and needs of the students. Community college faculty are a diverse group, coming from graduate schools, business, industry, and the professions, but most agree that their important problems are motivation of students, lack of time for professional refreshment, and problems with transfer requirements.

William Bland (1982) utilized Harold Wilensky's index of role orientations (1964) to study 112 community college faculty in North Carolina. Role orientation is influenced in part by the source of reference group identification--that is, whose judgements of quality of performance are important to the

faculty member. In Bland's study, 48% of the faculty chose students, and only 5% chose colleagues. Wilensky's study of university professors found that they had a high profession, low client orientation. Professional orientation meant a strong identity with the profession and colleagues; client orientation meant strong identity with institutional leadership and students. Bland's survey of community college instructors found the same orientations as university faculty, but weaker correlations caused him to conclude that client orientation is not necessarily a barrier to professionalism.

Community college faculty appear to want to become more involved in professional activities. Cohen and Friedlander (1979) report that, in addition to more time for students and more interaction with administration, faculty wants more opportunity for professional development. Sixty percent indicated that, given a choice, they would devote more time to research or professional writing. This indicates a desire for professional stimulation beyond that derived from instructional-related activities.

These data indicate that it may be possible to incorporate professional activity with a teaching load, and also that faculty are desirous to do so. It may also be imperative that this occurs. Gleazer (1980) discusses the potential monotony and routinized teaching that may result from "overkill" of instruction in a teaching college.

A second obstacle lies in the structure of the institution itself. Harold Wilensky (1964) discusses the effect that the bureaucratic structure can have on professionalism--especially to autonomy and the service ideal. Professionals that work for a salary in complex organizations are subject to the controls of the hierarchy. Thye "top-down" philosophy of the bureaucracy is not conducive to autonomous governance. However, Wilensky also points out that the crux of the issue of autonomy for salaried professionals is whether the organization itself is infused with professionalism, as when a large percentage of employees and managers are from professional ranks.

Bureaucratic structures organize their work in ways that protect the personnel, and can thereby neglect the service ideal. When comfortable, organizational routines take command, the salaried professional may lose sight of client needs.

Another way that the institution may impede the process of professionalism is the absence of a reward structure for activities other than teaching. Faculty have indicated a desire for more sabbaticals, grants for summer study and released time (Cohen & Friedlander, 1980). In many cases, these opportunities are available. However, even in institutions providing these elements, involvement in research, publications or developmental activities is not part of the procedure for faculty evaluation or promotion and tenure decisions. Robert Wilson (1981) aired his feelings as a faculty member in an article in Community College Frontiers. He expressed his outrage at what he called "automatic promotions", and indicated that, to warrent promotion, faculty

members ought to make noteworthy contributions to the profession at large as well as to the institution.

Hammons (1983) discusses the futility of establishing faculty development prorams without incorporating them into evaluation systems. He quotes an irate faculty member who participated in such a program: "I spent nights and weekends improving my courses, neglected my husband and kids, let my tennis game go to pot, gained weight, and for what? The same salary increase as the turkey next door to me who hasn't changed his teaching in five years" (p. 78).

The professional associations have also proven to be a barrier, rather than a support to community college faculty's struggle for professional status. The discipline associations have not exhibited much interest in attracting community college instructors to their ranks. This stems from the historical purposes of these groups to advance scholarship in their respective disciplines. Most have given limited attention to teaching, although some groups have recently made attempts. For example, the American Philosophical Association conducted a series of philosophy-teaching workshops; and the National Council of Teachers of English has from its beginnings involved educators from all sectors (Smeltekopf, 1983).

Non-discipline associations have also been lax in their inclusion of community college faculty. The American Council on Education, the American Association of Higher Education, and the Association of American Colleges report minimal involvement intheir activities by community college faculty. Even the

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American Association of Community and Junior Colleges has not involved faculty, but rather serves as a link among and between administrators and the field at large. The most active of professional organizations in attracting community college faculty are those directed toward employee related concerns: The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. Small wonder at the strength of these collective bargaining units in the community college.

Preservice and inservice offerings are also barriers to professional growth by virtue of what they are not. Academic degree programs have not been appropriate for a teacher in a community college. Subject matter master's degrees usually mean narrow course specialization with little or no instruction related to the community college and its constituents. Colleges and universities have experimented with teachng degrees at the master's and doctoral level with limited success (O'Banion,1973).

Inservice or faculty development programs have also been deficient, although there has been increased attention to these areas in recent years--possibly as a result of collective bargaining contracts. However, in general, inservice programs are not well organized or well-supported. Faculty development is not a high priority in the community college, and it is often the first place for budget cuts.

Mechanism for Improvement

Although a bureaucratic system cannot be easily changed, the institutions themselves can still make changes that will enhance the professional process. Development of well-designed and

strongly supported inservice programs is one step that should be taken. The purpose of such programs is to enhance opportunitiesfor student development through the professional growth of the faculty. Institutional support reaps benefits for the college as well as for the individual. Ideally, the program is so woven into the fabric of the school that it is accepted as normal by the faculty. Programs must be well structured, with specifically designated responsible leaders, and be related to the long-term goals of the institution (O'Banion, 1973).

Most importantly, the institution must value these activities by making them part of evaluation, promotion and tenure decisions. For example, at Moraine Valley Community College, all faculty role definitions are included in the evaluation process, and each is weighted. Teaching and instruction is 60-80% of the evaluation; college service is 10-20%; and professional growth is 10-30%. Professional growth is defined as improvement in the competence of a faculty member in order to better fufill the role and responsibilities of the position, professional achievement, and/or contributions to the educational profession (Smith, 1983).

Another example is the North Country Community College. Each faculty member develops a plan which is reviewed during the evaluation meeting. The plan includes intended activities in teaching, college/governance activities and professional development. The plan is reviewed throughout the year, and becomes part of the reappointment, tenure and promotion processes (Poole & Dellow, 1983).

Support for faculty development should take place beyond the institutional level. The Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education created the Center for Professional Development with support from a Kellogg grant. The Council has a membership of 2,500 faculty and administrators from three public and oneprivate community college, one large state urban university, and ten private liberal arts colleges. The Center provides services for teaching and administrative effectiveness, and personal services such as linkages with informational services and professional activities. On a state level, the Guidelines Committee of the Florida Staff and Development Program consists of one representative from each community college who is responsible for five-year faculty development plans and yearly updates (Smith, 1983).

The professional organizations need to address the needs of the community college faculty and make efforts to include them in their ranks. There is an important relationship between community colleges and universities, and increased communication between these faclties can only be beneficial to both sectors. Smeltekopf (1983) also suggests the emergence of professional associations founded by and designed explicitly for community college faculty. An example is the Community College Humanities Association. He indicates that these associations should address issues that link teacher, student and knowledge; should be multi-disciplinary; and should maintain contacts with key individuals and institutions in higher education of all sectors.

Preservice education for community college faculty should generate an understanding of the history of and commitment to

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to the philosophy of the two-year college. O'Banion (1973) recommends internships which allow a student to become involved in the institutions. Clearly, the universities responsible for the development of these preparatory programs must themselves be knowledgeable about the community college and the needs of faculty who are to teach there. The most important factor in overcoming the barriers to professional status is the faculty themselves. Cohen and Brawer (1977) speak of the large number of community college faculty that are "recluses", hidden away from the disciplines, from their counterparts in the secondary and university sectors, and even from the currents of their own institution. This isolation behind classroom doors creates an inertia resulting in demoralization, and what Smeltekopf (1983) refers to as "early intellectual retirement" (p.89).

It is important that faculty become challengers and risk takers. Professional activities extend beyond research and publication in prestigious journals. Braxton and Toombs (1982) indicated that scholarly performance can be measured in other ways than publication, and maintain that reward systems should be more in keeping with the day-to-day activities of most academic professions. Their study validated seventy-one scholarly activities. They included public talks and lectures, work in local service organizations, and other public services such as seminars or writing articles in a local newspaper. This kind of communication with the community is a perfect avenue for faculty in the two-year institutions which are so committed to community

affairs. Institutional activities that are scholarly include participation in studies to solve department problems, and assistance in accreditation review. Scholarly activities can also be integrated into course content by using current books in class and/or using current journal articles in lectures. Clearly, imaginative and creative faculty can find ways to expand their professional horizens despite the amount of time that is spent in teaching.

Conclusion

Community college faculty have not yet attained the status of a profession, although in many areas they have made progress. Individual faculty may follow established professional ideals, but this is not enough. There needs to be a nationwide effort to interpret the distinctive features of the work of community college faculty. Harold Wilensky (1964) theorizes that professionalism is a process over time, and indicates that teaching is on the borderline along with nursing and social work. Faculty must realize that, despite the fact that they are working in an environment that is not necessarily conducive to professional activities, they can attain the status that they seek.

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